

PORT DAVEY IN 1875.

BY THE HON. JAMES REID SCOTT, M.L.C.

[Read 13th September, 1875.]

At the present time Port Davey supplies Hobart Town with the great bulk of the timber known as "Huon Pine" [*Dacrydium Franklinii*], and has done so for several years back. That port may indeed be said to be the chief seat of the pine-getting industry in Tasmania, Macquarie Harbour being deserted, and the Pieman, Picton, and Craycroft, worked to a very limited extent, if at all. The pines obtained on the Forth and Dove Rivers are, I believe, of a different species [*Athrotaxis selaginoides*] called "pencil pine," or "King William Pine." From the nature of the Port Davey district, the beds of timber are necessarily of limited extent; and although occasional supplies have been obtained for more than 50 years, and a steady industry has been continuously prosecuted there for the last 25 years, still circumstances (such as a rise in prices, and consequent influx of piners) might extinguish the trade for a time, until young trees grow up to a size fit for market. I do not apprehend any such result, but I hope that a few personal observations on the locality, its pine industry and forests, etc., during a recent visit, will be interesting, even to those who fully know and appreciate the details and hardships of the occupation of a piner.

In March last I paid a visit to Port Davey for a second time, having been there about four years previously with Mr. Piguenit, who took some very characteristic sketches of the scenery. Though my main object this time was to have some hunting and fishing, I took the opportunity of going to the actual workings in the pine-forests, the present scenes of labour; and I saw much new to my personal experience, although not altogether unknown to me by report. I therefore make no apology for presenting to your notice the following account of my trip.

On my former visit my party went and returned by land, along the naturally defined series of valleys and "saddles" or passes, mainly clear of forest, up the course of the Huon, down that of Spring River, and across the Berry Head Range—an unmistakable route to anyone with knowledge of the localities, though not without its difficulties in travelling. The road from Victoria to the Craycroft is so overgrown and blocked up, that the journey from Hobart Town to Port Davey by that route could not well be made now under four days, and I would not advise a stranger to attempt it at all. On the second occasion I went and returned by water, going

down with Captain Lloyd in the "Swansea Packet," and coming back with Captain Dominey in the "Ripple," both regular traders.

The inhabitants were little changed during the four years which had elapsed. I found the well-remembered faces, and received the same cordial welcome and hospitality as before. Similar packs of half-starved dogs lifted up their voices, and would have stolen anything eatable left within their reach. The children had, of course, grown up beyond recognition; and an old resident, Mr. Bennett, had returned, and was busy building a good-sized barge. Doherty, the oldest inhabitant, who has been there ever since 1849, placed a hut at Observatory Point at my disposal, and Captain Lloyd lent me a good whaleboat.

Besides those at Port Davey settlement, numbering about 50, there is an isolated establishment at Spring River, where Mr. Page was at work, but he was unfortunately hampered in his proceedings by a sad accident which befell his mate George Baker. When upon a scaffold to fell a tree, Baker lost his balance, and his foot caught in one of the props, which caused him to swing and fall heavily against the butt of the tree, dislocating his left shoulder. There was no opportunity for nearly a month after this to get him to town for medical assistance, the shoulder remaining "out" all the time. Dr. Crowther was applied to, but Baker had to go to the Hospital for the operation of setting. Since then (owing possibly to the prior delay) the whole arm has been powerless, and is gradually withering and decaying, extending upwards from the fingers. The poor fellow's days of active labour seemed at an end—the more to be deplored because he was a very steady industrious man, with a wife dependent upon his exertions.

The houses at Bramble Cove were all unoccupied.

My anticipations of good sport were not fully realised in consequence of the weather. Continual storms, with a low barometer, entirely precluded trumpeter fishing (for which one has to go outside the Heads), and made boating generally attended with more risk than pleasure. I visited Kelly's Basin and the West Coast beyond it; went up Bathurst Harbour and New Harbour Creek nearly to Cox's Bight; and up the Davey River to the plains known as Longley's Ground and The Rookery. Kangaroo, wallaby, wombat, ducks, and swans were abundant; some of the latter were then "moulters," and we could pull them down with the boat. The greatest treat, now as formerly, was the plentiful supply of oysters, Kelly's Basin containing the largest and most easily obtained rock-oysters I have seen, and they

were in prime condition. Mounds of empty shells at various parts of the beach gave proof that the aborigines had also appreciated them in days gone by. While speaking of game, I must mention a fact respecting the wombat which coincides with my own experience and the opinion of many bush travellers. In the year 1866 the Port Davey settlers were, owing to heavy gales, for some months without supplies of flour and provisions, so that they were compelled to live on "wild" meat alone, and most of them took to hunting during that time. Their unanimous verdict is that they very soon got tired of kangaroo or swan's flesh, but could subsist on wombat without dislike; also that a meal of the latter had far more nutritive power than kangaroo.

It is almost impossible to describe the country round Port Davey to one accustomed only to the settled portions of Tasmania, while the grand scenery such as Hell's Gates, must be seen to be realised. Written landscapes leave no picture in the mind of a stranger. The greater portion of the country is open, consisting of broken ground or large flat plains between steep and lofty ranges, covered with button grass and intersected by belts of timber of various shapes and sizes; the timber is generally along the banks of streams, or in gullies on the mountain sides, though some of the ranges are entirely wooded. The hills are steep and rugged, and show their white quartzite rocks bare at the top, which gives many the appearance of being snow-clad, and throughout the day they are ever assuming new forms and colours as the sunlight strikes them at a different angle. Thus the country is most picturesquely diversified by white rocky ranges, warm-coloured plains and sombre forests; and in fine weather looks both wild and beautiful. The plains are made gay by many flowering plants, conspicuous among which is the *Blandfordia* with its crimson and yellow spikes of flowers, growing in every situation from the margins of creeks to the crevices of rocks on mountain summits. Like all Western Tasmania, as the open ground gives one the impression of desolation and barrenness, so on entering a forest the opposite extreme of rank vegetation is immediately encountered. Underneath there is generally a tall and tangled growth of wireweed (*Bauera*) and cutting-grass, with horizontal scrub (*Anodopetalum*), Laurel (*Anopterus*) Native plum (*Cenarrhenes*) and all those shrubs most conspicuous in our western forests; pinkwood, hickory, and teatree attain a large size, gums and myrtles (*Fagus*) being the lofty trees. These forests are enlivened by the climbers *Billardiera* and *Prionotes*, which often form festoons from tree to tree. *Richea pandanifolia* is frequently met with.

The pines have a peculiar limitation in their distribution worthy of remark; growing on the margins of small streams or in the alluvial flats along the rivers, they seem to be derived only from the west or south-west sides of the ranges. The leading mountain chains run nearly parallel with the coast, about N.N.W., and no pines are found along the streams running from their eastern slopes. In like manner, when the Davey is divided into two branches, about sixteen miles up, the western branch is called the Hardwood River, because no pines have been found along its course. The other branch which is fed from the south-west slopes of the Frankland Range, is well supplied, and from it the great bulk of the timber is now being procured. Again, the range from which the Hardwood River derives most of its tributaries, is pine-clad on its south-western slopes, the streams from which run into the sea near Rocky Point. In Spring River the same feature is observed, and also in the originally named "Spring River" at the extreme eastern end of Bathurst Harbour; and I have no doubt from the formation of the country and my knowledge of the Arthur and Huon Plains, that the Craycroft presents the same peculiarity. Of the Picton, Gordon, Franklin, and Pieman I do not know enough to hazard an opinion.

At the highest point I visited up the Davey River, where Doherty is at work, are some King William Pines (*Athrotaxis selaginoides*) whose wood is much more open-grained than Huon pine, and of a red colour. I have no doubt that towards the Frankland Range they will be found in great numbers.

The pine is not met with near the margin of the salt water, though one spot was pointed out to me on the bank of the tidal portion of the Davey, about half way between the Settlement and Hell's Gates, which had been a thicket of small pine trees of several acres in extent, not observed until a large fire swept through and killed them. Some distance up the Crossing River there is an untouched bed of pines, but below it the steep banks of the river have fallen in and blocked up all passage for floating the logs down, affording complete protection to that bed of timber, unless a short tramway is made to surmount the obstacle.

The river has been followed up and the timber along its course gradually cleared out until the beds which produce the present supply are reached, from fourteen to eighteen miles up. To visit them I took the course usually followed by the piners, except on special occasions; going from the settlement by boat up the river as far as the Pen at Brooke's Bay, we then shouldered knapsacks and walked about four

and a half miles to the head of Long Fall, thereby cutting off a large elbow of the river, and avoiding Hell's Gates, Long-Tom Fall, and the Broken Road, all difficult for boats. From Long Fall we again took boat and pulled about a mile up a beautiful still reach, the banks studded with ferns and pinkwood in full flower, and landed on the right bank. From this landing place is a pathway, considerably less distinct than a wombat track, for about eight miles chiefly among button grass, to their general rendezvous opposite the Bark Hut Creek. Here the timbered flat is wide, and this has been one of the most prolific beds, as the stumps testify; and although some pioneers, Doherty, Woolley, and others have pushed on further up the stream, there are still many trees got from this locality, formerly overlooked or considered too difficult of access. There are numerous young trees growing up, which should be preserved till they have attained a certain size. Here are generally several boats on each side of the river for persons going or returning. Navigation extends very little further, except for log-clearing. There is a track to the settlement down the left or east side also, but it is about three miles longer than the other, and the Crossing River has to be forded.

The Crossing River, which comes from the Arthur Range, is sometimes called locally the Davey River, being rather the wider of the two at their confluence; and the Davey River proper is, in that case, called the DeWitt River, the DeWitt going by the name of Badger Creek. This is owing, in a great measure, to the meagre information on the official map. The Davey rises between the junction and Wilmot Ranges, and flows down the wide valley to the west and southwest of the Frankland Range, in two branches, which unite about a mile above Bark Hut Creek. The Crossing River joins the Davey about two miles above the Long Fall, coming in abruptly from the south-east, having burst through a high range by a narrow ravine in the same unexpected manner as the united streams pass through the gorge of Hell's Gates, instead of traversing the low valley which seems to be the natural course. Many of the small creeks have the same peculiarity, so that it is difficult to make a correct topographical sketch of the district on a short visit. My opportunities of taking observations were too few to enable me to submit with any confidence a plan to illustrate the district.

The pine trees grow in the densely timbered alluvial flat in the valley of the river, subject to frequent inundations, and varying in width from about 100 to 1,200 yards, intersected by a network of creeks and channels formed by the flood waters, and filled in the winter months. These channels



Hells Gates, River Dorey



have to be cleared of obstructions, fallen timber, etc., so that the pine logs may be floated down to the main river. Tracks have also to be cut through the scrub, about 18 feet in width, and sets of "skids" laid down so that the logs may be rolled into these channels or into the river. Hence the forests are traversed by numerous skid roads winding in all directions, to suit the trees successively cut down. In some places the floods occasionally rise high enough to enable boats to be used and the logs floated out over the ferns and undergrowth.

After the logs are cut to their proper length and stripped of their bark, they are branded at the ends with the initials or mark of the owner,—letters generally an inch in height,—punched into the wood with a smart blow of a hammer. Doherty told me he had known cases where as much as two inches had been sawn off the end of a log so branded, with a view to its appropriation, and the brands made in the above manner were detected by putting boiling water on the new faces or ends, whereby the old marks became visible;—the punching process affecting the fibres to an extent that a brand by hot irons would not.

After the logs are in the river commences the work of "clearing down" whenever there is a flood. The logs on their passage down get jammed at eddies, stranded on low banks, or otherwise detained. Two men go in a dingy, one to pull, the other with an iron-pointed prodder to release the logs and push them into the current. The dingies are of the shape commonly used about the Huon,—square stem and stern, and without keel, so that they are quickly turned round and easily guided by experienced hands. From the narrowness of the river in many places, this is the best sort of boat for coming down the rapids. This work is attended with considerable danger, and requires skill and presence of mind. Henry Longley and his mate Buxton were drowned in the Huon when so employed about three years ago. To the honour of the Port Davey piners, they are always willing to devote part of their time to show the special dangers of the river to any new comer. I came down from the Bark Hut Creek in one of these dingies, to see the nature of the river; and although there was only a small body of water I enjoyed the trip. The scenery is beautiful, especially about the Bay of Islands and the Davey Rapids. There are many rapids in the river, all with characteristic and well known names: in fact every eddy or remarkable spot has a local name, as well as the creeks, plains, and hunting-grounds about the Port, which do not always coincide with those on the official plans.

The dwellings occupied by the piners when up the river are

of the style known as "Badger-boxes," in distinction from huts, which have perpendicular walls, while the Badger-box is like an inverted V in section. They are covered with bark, with a thatch of grass along the ridge, and are on an average about 14 × 10 feet at the ground, and 9 or 10 feet high. The sleeping bunk, raised about three feet, occupies the whole of one end, and can accommodate six people easily. The other end is enclosed by the fire-place, if on high ground; but those in the flats among the pine are left open in front, with the floor slabbed, and provision made for mooring the boat to the bedpost. Longley, before mentioned, kept a careful and minute diary for several years, and makes frequent entries illustrative of this life, such as the following:—

1863, April 3:—Went in the dingie to a stump to make a fire to boil the kettle for breakfast.

1863, April 7:—Log getting; Longley and Doherty cut off a log, up to our waistbands in water.

1863, July 4:—Water 2 feet up the posts of the bunk this morning. Had to boil the kettle on a stump.

1864, Oct. 12:—Took rations to the Badger box. Water up to our waists.

1867, Aug. 22:—Did not go to bed last night, as the water was rising until daylight this morning.

1868, Oct. 6:—Flood over the second step this morning.

And many others to a similar effect.

The men are generally employed in pine-getting and rolling into the river, during February, March, April, and May, with occasional visits home for rations, etc. After that they are on the constant watch for floods, and go up the river to clear down whenever there is a chance. When the logs reach the tidal water they are caught and put into "pens," which are enclosures in some eddy or still water, formed of stakes interlaced with brushwood, and a log chained across the entrance as a gate. When a vessel comes for a load, from 10 to 18 logs are fastened together into a raft, and towed down below the bar alongside the vessel at the usual anchorage. The settlement has extended in this direction since my last visit, and there are now several dwellings close to the anchorage.

As regards distribution of ground, there is an understood code of honour among them not to interfere with each other within a certain distance, so well observed that I heard no complaint of any one having taken an undue advantage. A creek or flood-channel is usually the centre line of a property, and is followed up on both banks. Any new comer wishing to go higher up the same creek must go ahead at least a quarter of a mile.

Longley's diary for the years 1863, 1864, 1865, and 1866

will give a fair sample of a piner's employment. He had three others as partners; and I find that his time was occupied on an average of these four years as follows:—100 days each year up the river felling timber and clearing down; 135 days at work at home, catching logs, squaring or sawing them, rafting and loading vessels, repairing boats, vessels, huts, pens, etc., gardening, and building vessels; 55 days hunting, fishing, and getting mutton-birds; 55 days visiting Hobart Town, including voyage and detentions; and 20 days unemployed, being Sundays, holidays, or bad weather. They built two vessels during these years, one of which was lost in Recherche Bay on its way to town to be sold. In the season ending June, 1864, they got pine logs to the extent of 58,336 feet, the quantities varying each week owing to track or creek clearing and other causes. During the week ending 5th March they got 4,509 feet; that ending 7th May 7,203 feet; that ending 21st June 2,234 feet. In another week they got as much as 9,440 feet. The size of the trees recorded also varies much. Logs 10 or 11 feet in girth were counted large; this would represent trees over 4 feet in diameter at the butt. The average seem to be 6 or 7 feet in girth. It is matter for consideration whether the supply of timber should be preserved, and the destruction of the beds prevented, by prohibiting the cutting of any trees under a certain size.

Many of the smaller trees in these forests would make good cabinet woods if there was any demand. The pinkwood (*Eueryphia Billardieri*) is hard, and has a fine colour. Like hickory and horizontal, the green logs make better camp fires than most of the dead timber that can be got in the dank forests where they grow. The hickory (*Phebalium Billardieri*, alias *Eriostemon squamea*) should also be a valuable wood. It is the only timber except the pine which is perfectly sound and dry inside after being submerged for years in muddy deposits, nearly all others being more or less rotten and discoloured. It is pale yellow in colour, and very tough. The ordinary size of both these is about 15 inches in diameter, with straight barrels 40 or 50 feet in height. They are common in all the western forests, and are abundant about Mounts Bischoff and Ramsay, and round Lake St. Clair.

Close to Observatory Point is Pebbly Beach, and on this, ever since Doherty remembers, lumps of coal are washed up after strong southerly weather, though no indications of coal-seams have been discovered on shore. Sandstone was reported to me as found up the Crossing River. Samples of both, with full information as to the dip and direction of the latter, have been promised me, and I will lay them before the Royal Society when I get them. Limestone occurs in the Davey Valley,

protruding in various places, bearing from each other a little to the west of north. I found the fern *Todea Africana*, but differing in habit from those in Northern Tasmania. Here it grew on the steep rocky banks of the Davey River with hardly any stem; there it is usually by the side of a creek, with large stems a yard or so in diameter. An *Alsophila* is met with up Pine Creek, but which variety I had not the opportunity of ascertaining.

The great drawback to the settlement at Port Davey is the absence of all educational advantages for the children. When Mr. Collis was stationed at Recherche Bay, some of the settlers managed to send children round there, but since his removal they are entirely dependent upon what the parents can impart, and as a rule there is too much hard work to be done to leave any time for that purpose. It is one of those exceptional spots which should not be tied down to the strict rules of our educational system. The people have also been utterly neglected by the clergy of all denominations, the latest visit being that of Archdeacon Davies, on the occasion of a pleasure trip in the City of Hobart 15 years ago, when he held a service at Bramble Cove, 8 miles from the settlement, so that hardly any could attend except the excursionists. I am certain that the visit of a regular clergyman would be well received there, without any fear of such a reception as described (on 15th April last) by a Mr. Cameron, with reference to some parts of the Huon district, of which he is reported to have said: "In many of these places a minister of the gospel would be hooted."

For a florid, yet not inaccurate, description of the scenery, I would recommend any one to look up the account by David Burn of Sir John Franklin's visit in 1842, published in the *United Service Magazine* for 1843. In an older work, *Views in Australia*, published in 1824, by J. Lycett, artist to Major-General Macquarie, the author's fancy carries him to the future when its shores will be dotted with villas and gentlemen's residences. James Backhouse also describes the place in chapter 3rd of his book on the Australian Colonies, having been obliged to spend 17 days there in 1832, during which the sheep were put ashore to feed. He mentions also the heaps of oyster shells.

But as I have endeavoured to make these remarks as short as possible, and to limit them chiefly to my own experiences at Port Davey, I shall not go into its previous history or industries, or discuss its capabilities of improvement and settlement, or the probability of its being a mineral district. I hope to pay it another visit to further test the latter point.

I shall therefore conclude by placing on record the

mutilated remains of the inscriptions in the cemetery. It is reported that a few years ago the crew of some whaling vessel cut down most of the wooden monuments for firewood; and whereas there were about twenty as far back as 1849, there are now but four, only one of which is perfect. I was reluctant to credit such a tale, but it was confirmed by the axe-marks on one of those still standing! Two others are lying on the ground among the heath and flowers, the spot where they were erected being untraceable. The inscriptions are as follows:—

I.

S A C R E D

TO THE

+ MEMORY OF +

PATRICK BOURKE

H E W A S K I L L E D B Y

A F A L L F R O M T H E B A R K

P L A N T E R ' S M A S T -

H E A D O F F M A Q U A R R I E

H A R B O U R F E B R U A R Y V 1872

A G E D 21 Y E A R S

R E M M E M B E R - M A N - A S - Y O U - P A S S - B Y

A S - Y O U - A R E - N O W - S O - O N C E - W A S - I

A S - I - A M - N O W - S O - Y O U - W I L L - B E

P R E P A R E - F O R - D E A T H - A N D - F O L L O W

+

M E

The above painted in white letters on a black ground. Erected lately by Capt. Reynolds, and fenced in.

II.

I N M E M O R Y

O F

G E O R G E,

N A T I V E O F M A N G E A D I E D

O N

B O A R D T H E B A R Q U E T E R R O R A p r i l

4 1853 A G E D 20 Y E A R S.

III.

S A C R E D

T O T H E

M E M O R Y

O F

M A T T H E W H E N D R Y

K I L L E D O N B O A R D T H E

M A I D O F E R I N

F E L L F R O M T H E M A S T H E A D

O N T H E 29 D A Y O F J A N U A R Y 1863

A G E D 32 Y E A R S

The above two inscriptions cut into the wood. The boards are lying on the ground.

IV.

SACRED

TO

THE MEMORY

JOHN CHA..

WHO DIED.....

BOARD BRIG "RO.....

13 January 1.....

AGED 39 YEA.....

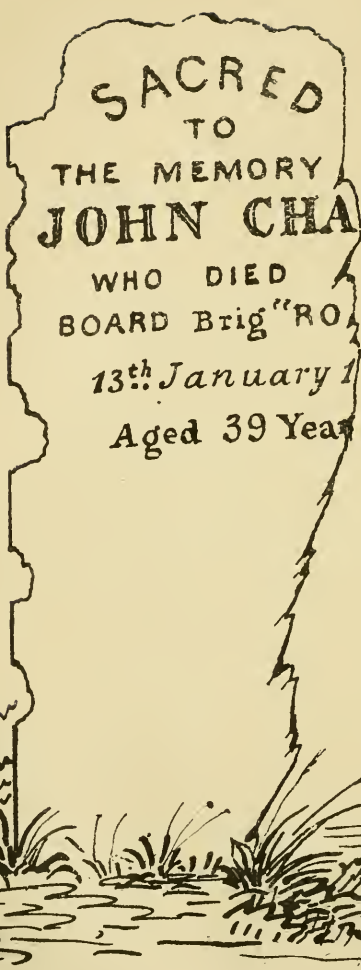
This was erected to John Chard of the brig "Roscoe," date not ascertained. It is much mutilated, and has been chopped with an axe.

The following is an extract from the account referred to in Mr. Scott's paper:—

"Narrative of the Overland Journey of Sir John and Lady Franklin and Party from Hobart Town to Macquarie Harbour. By DAVID BURN, Author of "Van Diemen's Land, Moral, Physical, and Political."

Tuesday, 17th May, 1842.—* * * At 2 p.m. a seven-knot easterly breeze enabled the *Eliza* to make a bold look up for the pyramidal rock, marking the entrance to Port Davey, and which now bore north. The Maatsuykers Islands were rapidly shut in as we drew along the bare, leafless, rugged coast, whose fantastic points looked dull and cheerless in the hard blue sky. They reminded me of the iron-bound ramparts that girdle the neighbourhood of Arbroath, and fancy could almost lead me to picture the celebrated, luckless, Tyrone Power, as he once stood upon one of the craggy points of the latter, delivering with much gesticulation (for he was a tragedian then) the oration of Antony over the body of Cæsar. At 4 the heads of Port Davey were gained, but the wind had fallen light, and, although the anchorage was but half-a-dozen miles distant, still the flood rushing out was so powerful that four bells of the first watch had been struck ere the anchor rattled over the bows. The moon became overcast, and heavy rain fell fast.

Wednesday, 18th.—A considerable quantity of rain fell during the night, but the weather continued moderate, although the barometer had sunk gradually from thirty to three-tenths thereunder. Morning dawned upon a clear sky, but less hard and less dazzling than those which had gladdened the three preceding days. We were reposing within the charming circular basin that forms the romantic haven of Port Davey, our schooner the centre of a wild but strikingly beautiful panorama, the quartz mountains rearing their magnificent cones in pearly grandeur to the sky, or sawing the air with pinnacled ridges, broken into every conceivable figure and form, their naked sides being furrowed with countless gorges, ravines, or gulleys. . Right ahead, or N.W., the river Davey wound its silent course. On the larboard or western hand, the low woody land called Garden Point presented its sequestered shores to be laved by another Kelly's Basin. On the starboard hand, or about E.S.E., the entrance to Bathurst Harbour, and Spring River, was just discernible. Numerous craggy



SACRED
TO
THE MEMORY
JOHN CHA
WHO DIED
BOARD Brig "RO
13th January 1
Aged 39 Year

Port Davey Cemetery: 22 March 1875.

*N.B. Erected to John Chard of the "Roscoe";
date not ascertained.*

IN MEMORY
OF
GEORGE
NATIVE OF MANGEA DIED
ON
BOARD THE BARQUE TERROR April
4 1853 AGED 20 YEARS

SACRED
TO THE
MEMORY
OF
MATTHEW HENDRY
KILLED ON BOARD THE
MAID OF ERIN
FELL FROM THE MASTHEAD
ON THE 29 DAY OF JANUARY 1863
AGED 32 YEARS

Port Davey Cemetery. 22 March 1875.

*N.B. These two are lying on the ground among
the shrubs.*

i slets guard the shore, one steep cliff showing a seemingly extensive cavern in its perpendicular face.

At 7 the anchor was aweigh, and we were working down towards Bathurst Harbour, the entrance to which lies on the south-east shore of Port Davey, about three miles above the pyramidal rock. It is guarded on either hand by islands of the most picturesque beauty, their summits shaded with peculiarly ornamental and umbrageous dwarf foliage, giving to their crown the same unspeakable grace that a fine head of hair imparts to the human face divine. The starboard island was named after Mr. Ronald Gunn; the smaller one on the larboard or north side, was styled "Kathleen Isle," a title given by Lady Franklin, in compliment to the wife of the writer. Some pretty, sharp, pinnaced rocks jutting from this isle, received the appropriate appellation, "Mavourneen." The faces of these islands and the circumjacent shores are composed of slabs of quartz, packed, if I may so express it, in slate-like layers. They are perforated with numberless caves, every bight and cove developing an infinite variety of such deep indentations. The conical hills of quartz, with the tiny patches of verdure minutely interspersed, give a mosaic-like character to the scene. Nevertheless, the elegant though rugged contour of those hills—the multiform, tortuous undulations of their sterile steeps—the dangerous acclivities of their scathed and frowning chasms, all combine in the production of a landscape singularly romantic; one that in a rude clime and wintry welkin, would inevitably be classed amongst the savage, a designation from which the genial atmosphere and Italian blue of the sky that o'er canopies, alone preserves it. Despite its barren character, even in the boisterous north, it might *sometimes* be termed a soft scene, every outline being so gracefully rounded—every asperity so much subdued. Light airs and floods proved annoyingly adverse to our outward progress, many hours being frittered away in the labour of a few minutes. We could do no good, and were, eventually, compelled to anchor.

At 11h. 30m., the gig pushed off on a trip up Spring River. The party it contained consisted of Sir John and Lady Franklin, Mr. Milligan, Mr. Giffin, second officer of the *Eliza*, and myself. About a mile above Kathleen, opposite to a conical peak of quartz, and close to the anchorage the schooner had been striving to gain, lies "Turnbull Island," named after the interim Colonial Treasurer. It is a low, rocky, brushy lump, bare at the summit and fringed at the edge, like a friar's pate. Above Turnbull some beautiful miniature bays are formed by a large projecting tongue of land, bare, verdant, and divided into conical swells towards the centre, but skirted with a leafy screen towards the water. Close to this point, a low, woody, circular island occupies the centre of the channel. In honour of Miss Franklin's governess, it received the appellation, "Williamson Island." Spring River here becomes perfectly land-locked; its waters expanding, and assuming the form of an extensive hill-embosomed lake. The day, hitherto, though dry, had been chilly; Apollo hid his glories in a vapoury shroud, peering occasionally through, not penetrating, the scene he seemed desirous to illumine. Rounding a bare promontory on the north shore, we entered a second extensive lake. A rugged, lofty, quartz

mountain, *now* called "Bracondale," lay right ahead, or E. by N. At its foot a pretty little fairy islet, covered with shrubs, received the name of "Louisa." The main channel, which we ascended, bore N.E., whilst a very lovely minor branch stretched away to the S.E. At this point the landscape became one of great and varied magnificence, being broken into numberless diversified bays and dells, winding valleys, and craggy ranges. We disturbed sundry black swans in our progress. Mr. Milligan having been put on shore, brought some shrubs and stones from Louisa—a memorial for the fair lady after whom the island had been named. During the stoppage consequent upon this debarkation, the sun broke forth, gilding with liquid glory a most conspicuous ridgy ravine that intersected the towering grassy mountains of the north shore. Immediately above Louisa Isle the hills separated into a broken spreading valley, Bracondale forming the upper, and a grassy, elevated, flat-topped mount, its advanced guards. This valley is watered by another branch of Spring River, or, very possibly, upon accurate investigation, these branches may be found to be but limbs of an extensive sea-arm. A channel of some two miles brings the tourist to a third and much larger lake, most enchantingly studded with various low, brushy islands. This lake flings its ramified, glittering limbs deep into the bosom of the mountain region wherein it is embedded. The picture it presents is one of indescribable magnificence, varying in character every thirty or forty yards. Here a smooth, grassy hill thrusts its velvet limbs into the wave. There an endless succession of wild, irregular cliffs, split into figures of the most extraordinary magnitude and extravagant form, pierce the sky with their uncouth points. Some are hollowed like gigantic punch-bowls, fit for the revels of the Cyclops; others assume the aspect of Nature's primitive fortifications, being ranged in long and imposing lines, tier over tier of deeply-scarped battlement and fosse—the naked crags presenting a variety of tints, white, pink, and slate being the prevailing hues that glanced and flickered in the varying sunlight. Hill soars over hill—crag surmounts crag—whilst peak and mountain-cone tower to heaven their proud pinnacles, shown in bold relief or veiled by the fleecy canopy that, ever and anon, strives to envelop their aspiring fronts. Nature is untarnished, primeval majesty reigns here supreme, whilst man looks on to wonder and adore. Would that the painter's art were mine! Would that I could give were it but a feeble copy of this transcendent picture; the subject could not fail to have inspired my pencil, it would have taught me to pourtray the glorious landscape in all its racy characters of heaven-born grandeur. This panoramic enchantment lies about eight or nine miles above Bathurst Harbour, the expanse of its waters terminating two or three miles further north, whilst the river, or what is said to be the river, flows from the E.N.E. for what distance has yet to be determined; ten or twelve long summer days might be most deliciously spent in the investigation of this little known locality. It is much to be regretted that the land, *seemingly*, is of such small avail, either agrestially or pastorally, because, with a moderate share of fair soil, the favourable position and immense navigable facilities of Port Davey must otherwise render it a

settlement of paramount value. A century may (is sure to) achieve what the present age cannot well accomplish.

We debarked upon a smooth, pebbly beach, partaking of a comfortable refection of ham, and bread and cheese, the task of deglutition being rendered easily practicable with the aid of some choice brown stout and superlative sherry. At 4 we plied the homeward oar, regaining the *Eliza* at 6, after having encountered a slight shower during our homeward progress. Mr. Bagot and Captain Harburg had preceded us with five swans. Strange! when the shooting a few of these birds would have afforded a most acceptable food to the famished pilgrims, we could, by no possibility, steal within reach; now that they were valueless, we had them to kick about. Having inspected everything that the advanced season of the year and the threatening aspect of the weather rendered conveniently practicable, the *Eliza*, at 7h. 42min. p.m., weighed anchor and dropped out of Bathurst Harbour with a light air from the N.W. At 8 we passed between Gunn and Kathleen Islands, opened the Great Caroline (a name given by whalers) pyramidal rock, and, with a flowing sheet, stood to sea.